



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **DEAD BIRDS CONTINUE TO TEST POSITIVE FOR WEST NILE VIRUS**

***Don't Say Goodbye to West Nile Virus Just Yet***

County Vector Control officials announced today that another dead bird found in La Mesa has tested positive for West Nile virus. The bird, a Western Scrub Jay, brings this year's total to six dead birds.

"Summer is coming to an end, but it does not mean that West Nile virus is going away. The recent confirmation of the sixth positive dead bird indicates that the virus is still active and mosquitoes are still biting," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the Department of Environmental Health. "Last year we saw the most West Nile virus activity in September and October."

Residents should continue to protect themselves against West Nile virus by taking precautionary measures to avoid getting mosquito bites. Mosquito bites are the only way that people can be infected.

Some tips to protect yourself from the virus include wearing insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus; wearing long sleeves and long pants outside, especially at dawn and dusk; and ensuring windows and screens are well-maintained to keep mosquitoes from entering the home. Another tip is to remove standing water which will eliminate mosquito breeding sites. Free mosquito fish are also available from the County to protect against the virus. These fish eat mosquito larvae before they hatch into biting adults. The fish are available at 13 locations throughout San Diego County and can be found by visiting the County's Web site.

Vector Control continues to monitor the spread of the virus through dead bird testing. The public is encouraged to report dead birds that meet the following criteria: dead for less than 24 hours, does not have a foul odor, is not covered with ants or flies, is not stiff; and has an intact body that has not been hit by a car, has not been shot, or killed by animals. Any other dead birds should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded in a covered trash can. While you cannot get West Nile virus from dead birds, you should wear disposable gloves if you must handle birds.

For more information on West Nile virus, prevention tips, or to report mosquito breeding sites or dead birds, please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's West Nile virus Web site, [www.SDFightTheBite.com](http://www.SDFightTheBite.com).

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